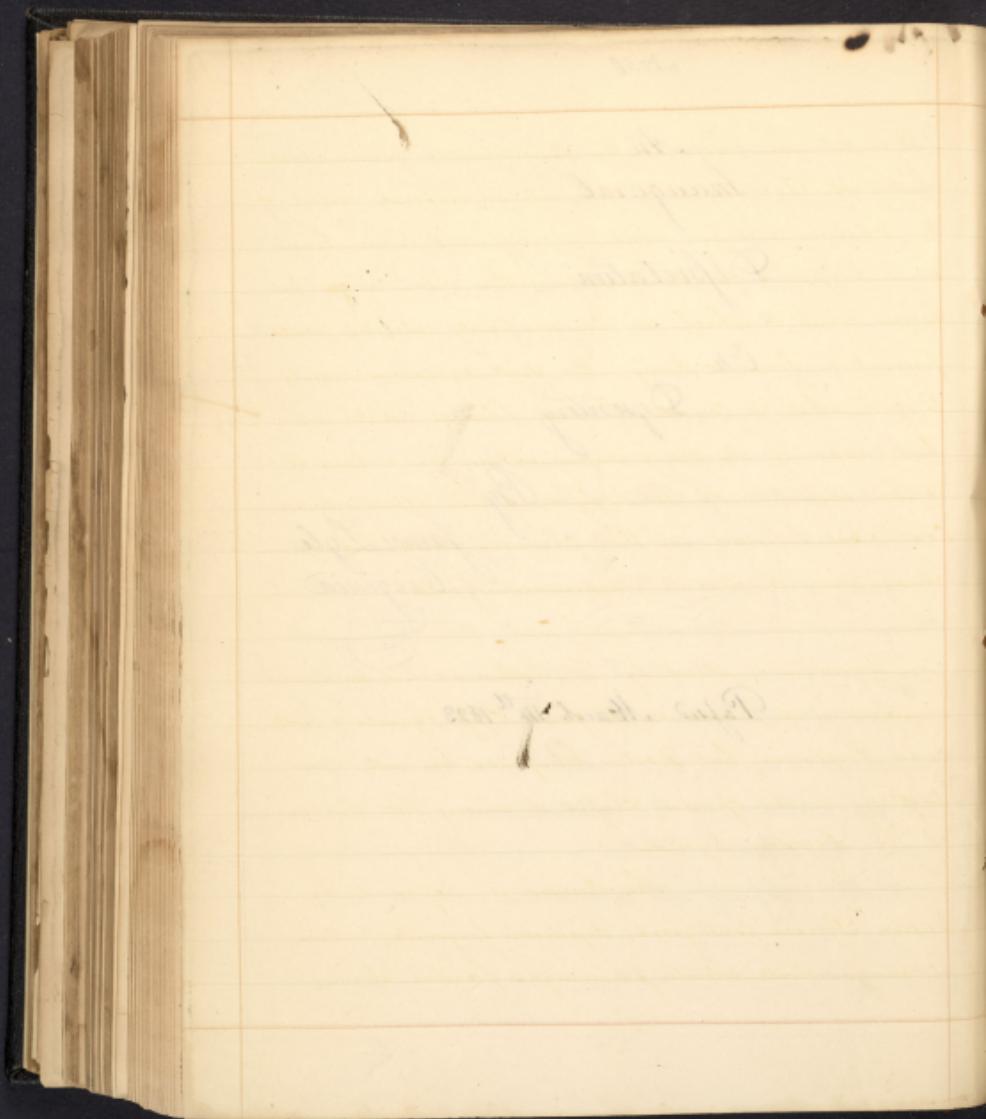


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An  
Inaugural  
Dissertation  
On  
Dysentery  
By  
James Lyle  
Virginia

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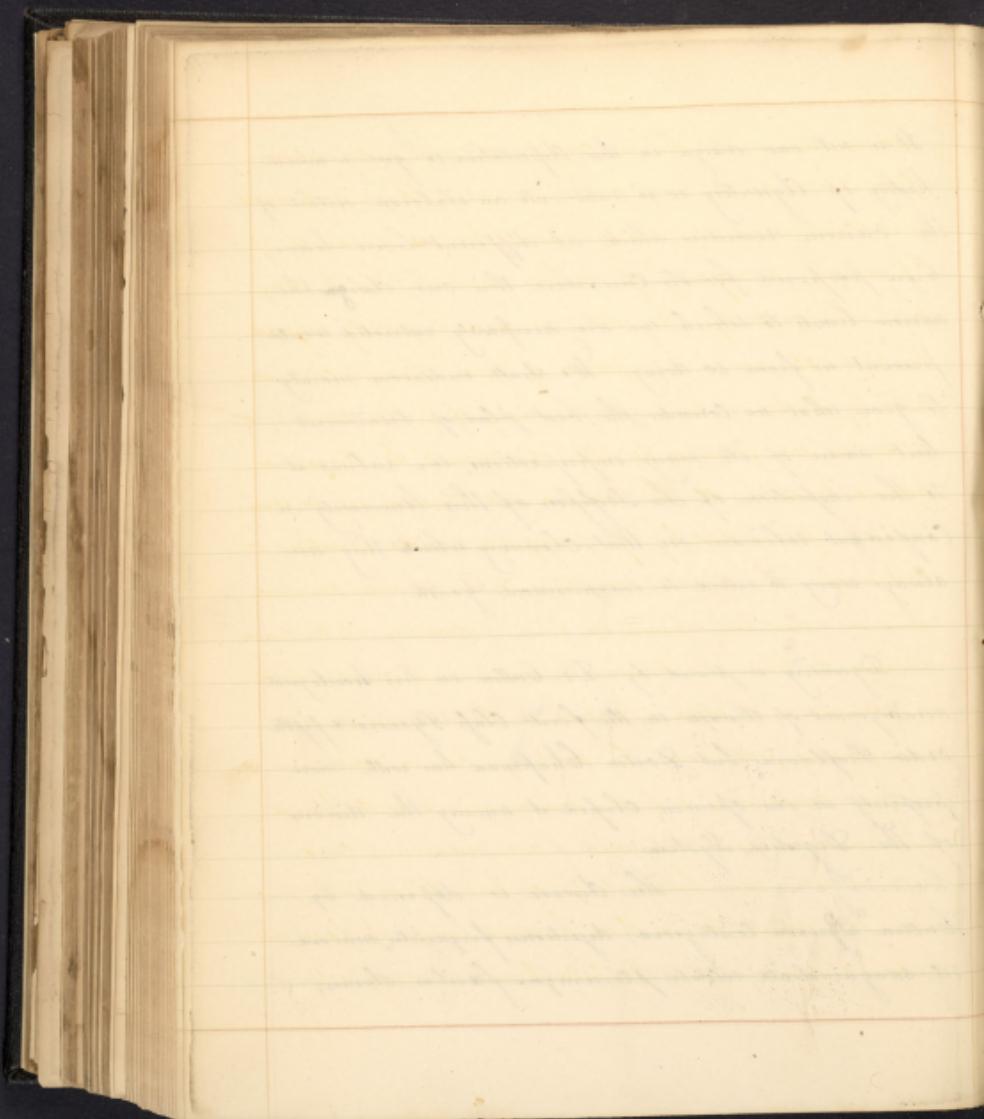


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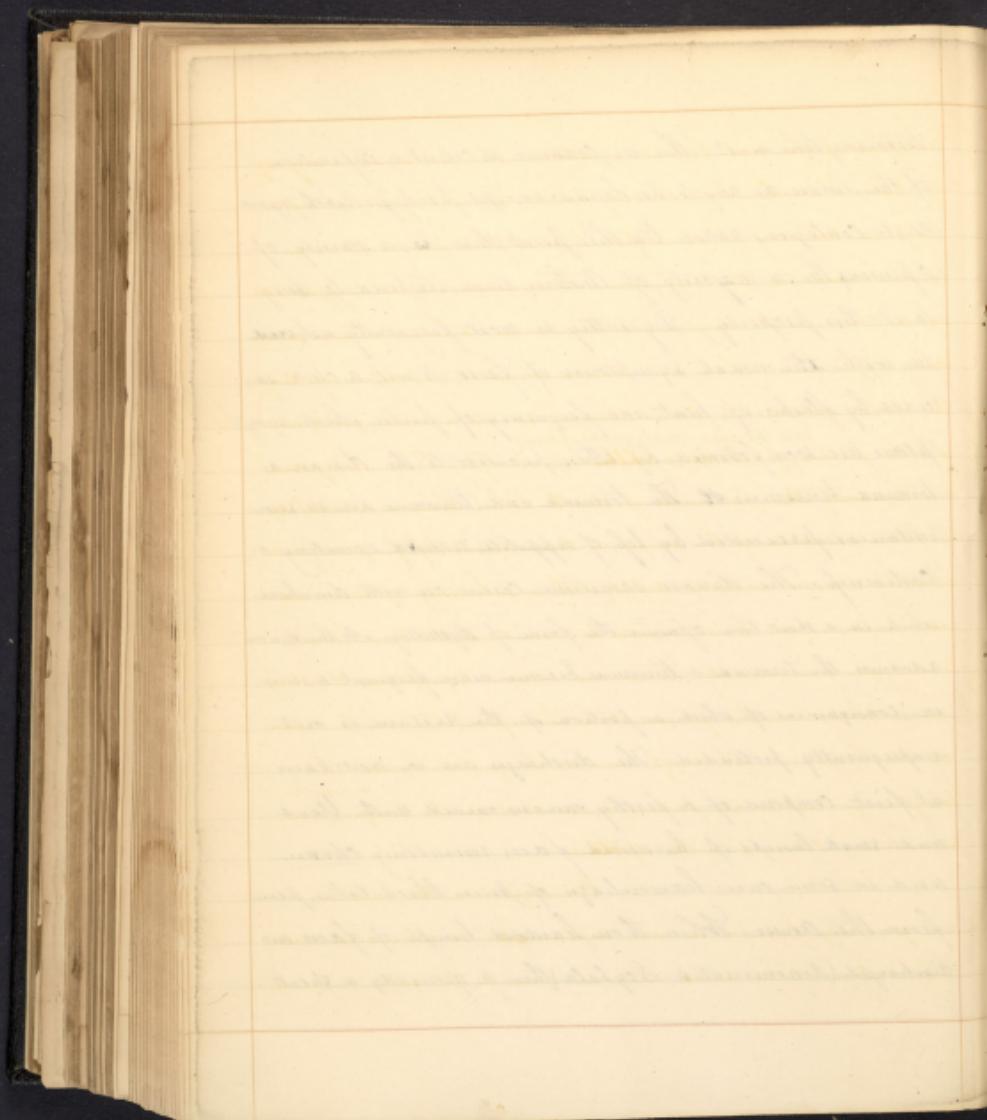
It is not our design in this Dissertation to give a minute history of Dysentery or to enter into an elaborate detail of the various Remedies which at different times have been proposed for its Cure, were this our design the narrow limits to which we are necessarily restricted would prevent us from so doing. We shall endeavour mainly to give what we consider the best plan of treatment but aware of its many imperfections, we submit it to the inspection of the Professors of this University in confident reliance on that Clemency which they are always ready to extend to inexperienced youth.

Dysentery is placed by Dr Cullen in his *Geological arrangement of Diseases* in the first Class Pyrexia & fifth order Prostertia, but Doctor Chapman has with more propriety in our opinion, classed it among the Diseases of the Digestive System.

Dr. Cullen. The Disease is defined by Cullen "Pyrexia Contagiosa; dijctiones frequentes, mucus vel sanguinolenta, sceleris pleniusque facibus alvini;

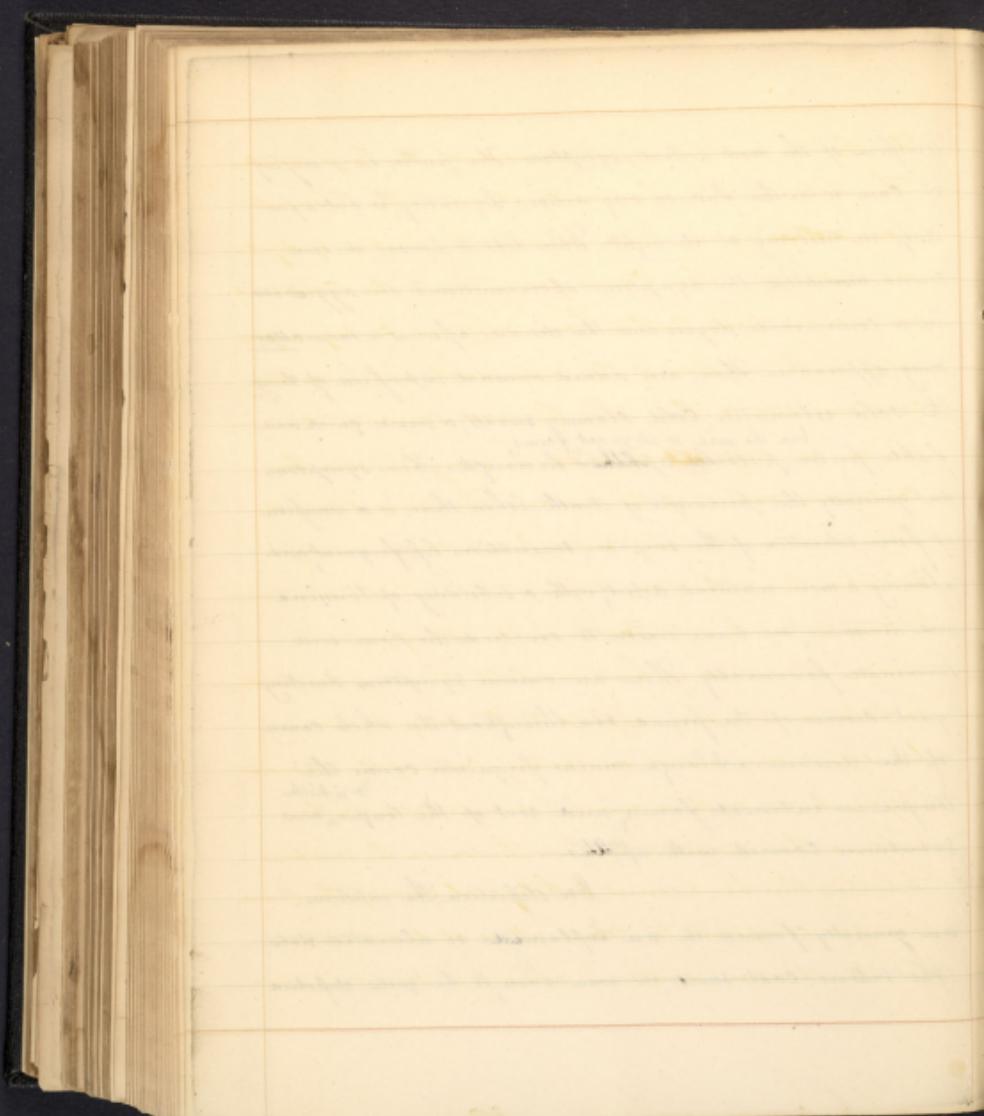


tormenta, tenesmus" This we consider as correct a definition of the disease as any to be found except perhaps with regard to its contagious nature. On this point there is a variety of opinions tho' a majority of authors seem disposed to deny to it this property. Dysentery is most frequently ushered in with the usual symptoms of fever, to wit, a chills succeeded by flushes of heat and frequency of pulse, which symptoms are soon followed by others peculiar to the disease as tormenta, tenesmus, &c. The tormenta and tenesmus are in some instances preceded by loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting & costiveness. The disease sometimes comes on with diarrhoea which in a short time assumes the form of dysentery. As the disease advances the tormenta & tenesmus become more frequent & even in consequence of which, a portion of the rectum is not infrequently protruded. The discharges are in most cases at first composed of a frothy mucus mixed with blood and small lumps of hardened feces resembling cheese and in some cases haemorrhage of pure blood take place from the anus. When these hardened lumps of feces are discharged (denominated Scybala) there is generally a short



Umification of the most violent symptoms. The pulse in a majority of cases is neither feverish nor very active. Dysentery is but a few days in arriving at its height. When left to pursue its own course unmitigated, the symptoms abovementioned are aggravated in a considerable degree, and the disease assumes a more alarming appearance. Then, are added unusual debility of strength, cold extremities, cold clammy sweats, a constipation quick and feeble pulse, ~~petechiae~~ <sup>in the more malignant forms,</sup> aphætae & hiccough. These symptoms are generally the precursors of death. When there is a remission of fever, relaxation of the surface, evacuations less frequent, and assuming a more natural aspect, with a subsiding of torments and terrors, we have reason to conclude the case will terminate favourably. There are various symptoms denoting great disease of the prima via throughout the whole course of the disease. A tough mucus frequently covers the tongue — internal fauces, and root of the tongue, are sometimes covered with ~~aphætae~~ <sup>which</sup>

On inspection, the intestines are generally found in an inflamed or ulcerated state. The villous coat seems, in some cases, to be quite effaced



The disease seems to affect principally the large intestines. The inflammation frequently extends to the Stomach, Liver & other Organs, which subserve the purpose of digestion and nutrition. The Causes giving rise to the Complaint are various. Some Authors have supposed Contagion generated in the system of the individual and from him communicated to others to be the most common cause, tho' we are ~~difficult~~ in evidence going to prove the Contagious nature of the disease. The disease frequently prevails as an Epidemic, arising from a common origin, and when this is the case, its production is to be attributed to some unknown disturbance of the Atmosphere.

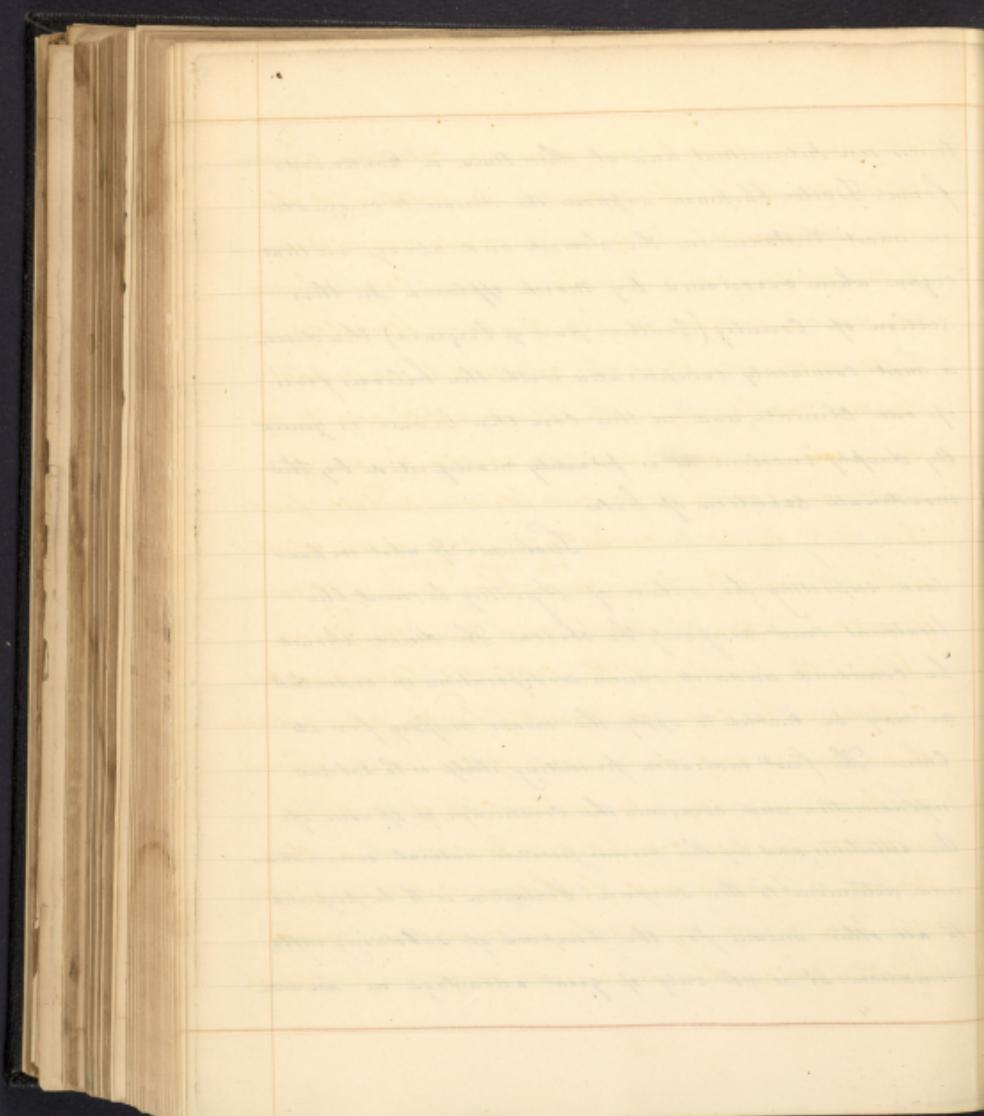
Sudden alternations of heat and cold, striking precipitately, or cold in any way applied to the body, producing this effect may act as an exciting Cause of the disease. Sydenham, with a number of respectable authors, suppose the disease to be fever thrown on the intestines. Whether this be a correct pathological view of the disease I am not competent to decide; it is at least certain that the disease sometimes appears a Remittent some



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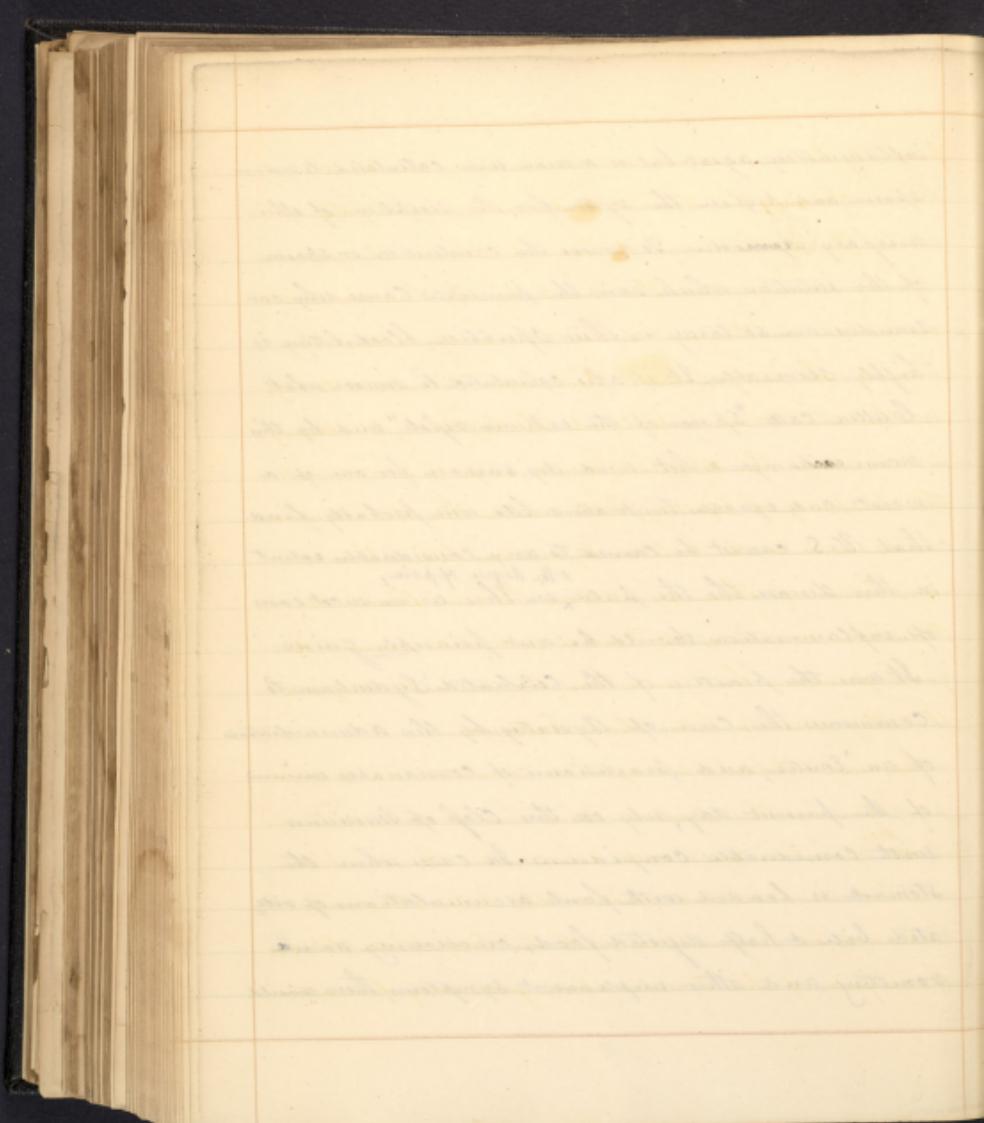
times an intermittent, and at other times a Continued, form. Doctor Chapman supposeth the disease to originate in most instances in the Stomach and always in that organ when occasioned by Marsh effluvia. In this section of County (Southern part of Virginia) the disease is most commonly complicated with the bilious fever of our Climate, and in this case the liver is generally deeply involved as is plainly manifested by the inordinate secretion of bile.

~~and relating the~~ Treatment. If what we have said respecting the nature of Aperient be correct, the treatment must necessarily be obvious. The disease should be considered under its various modifications in order that we may be enabled to apply the means necessary for its cure. The first indication presenting itself is to subdue inflammation and overcome the constriction or spasms of the intestines, and by this means, procure natural evacuation and determine to the surface. Convection is to be preferred to all other means for the purpose of subduing inflammation. It is not only of great advantage as an anti-



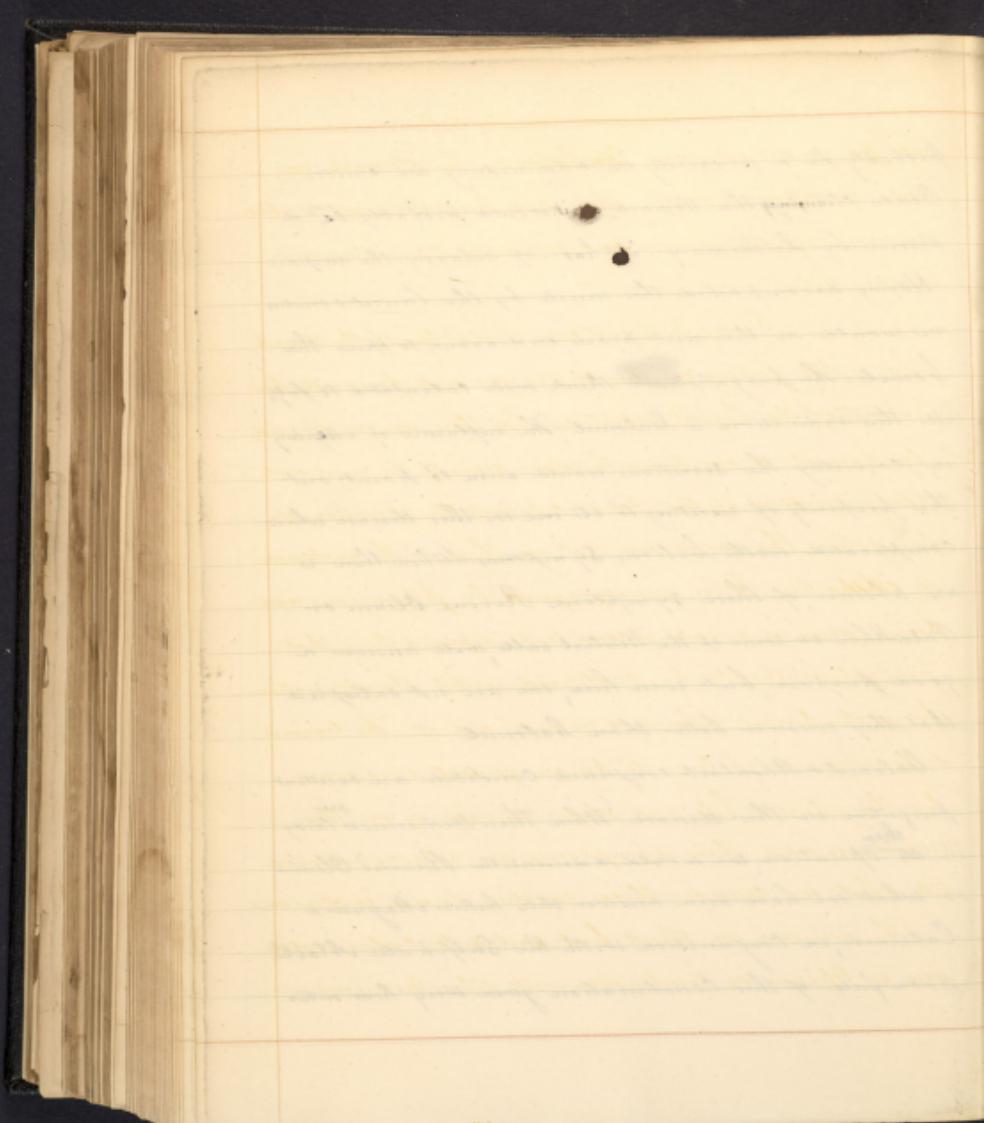
inflammatory agent, but is a means well calculated to reduce spasm, and prepare the system for the reception of other necessary agents. To remove the constriction or spasm of the intestines, which save the principle cause why our remedies are so tardy in their operation, blood-letting is highly serviceable. It is also calculated to remove what Cullen calls "Spasms of the extreme vessels" and by this means exchange a hot and dry surface for one of a moist and equable temperature. We will probably find that U. S. cannot be cured to any considerable extent in this disease <sup>the degree of pain,</sup> the pulse ~~in this~~ as in most cases of inflammation should be our principle guide.

It was the practice of the celebrated Sydenham to commence the cure of Aysentey by the administration of an Emetic, and practitioners of considerable eminence of the present day, rely on this class of Medicines with considerable confidence. In cases where the Stomach is loaded with foul accumulations of vitiated bile & half digested food, occasioning nausea & vomiting and other unpleasant symptoms, there would



probably be a property in administering an emetic. Besides cleansing the Stomach, it would probably be of service by the tendency it has of relaxing the surface. Having accomplished this much by the lancet & emetic we would in the next place, endeavor to open the bowels. The purgation ~~we~~ think will be calculated to fulfil all this indication is Calomel. The influence of Mercury in correcting the secretions, would soon to point out the propriety of resorting to its use in this disease when complicated with bilious Symptoms. When there is an absence of these symptoms Recini Plum or Patent Rheii or some of the Neutral salts, will answer a good purpose, but even here, we are not satisfied that they answer better than Calomel.

Calomel & Rhubarb combined constitute an excellent purgative in this disease. When these Medicines <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>their</sup> ~~in~~ Operation, we would administer Recini Plum or what we have seen answer still better Magnesia Calcaria, in conjunction with the Sulphates. A Table spoon full of this combination given every hour or two



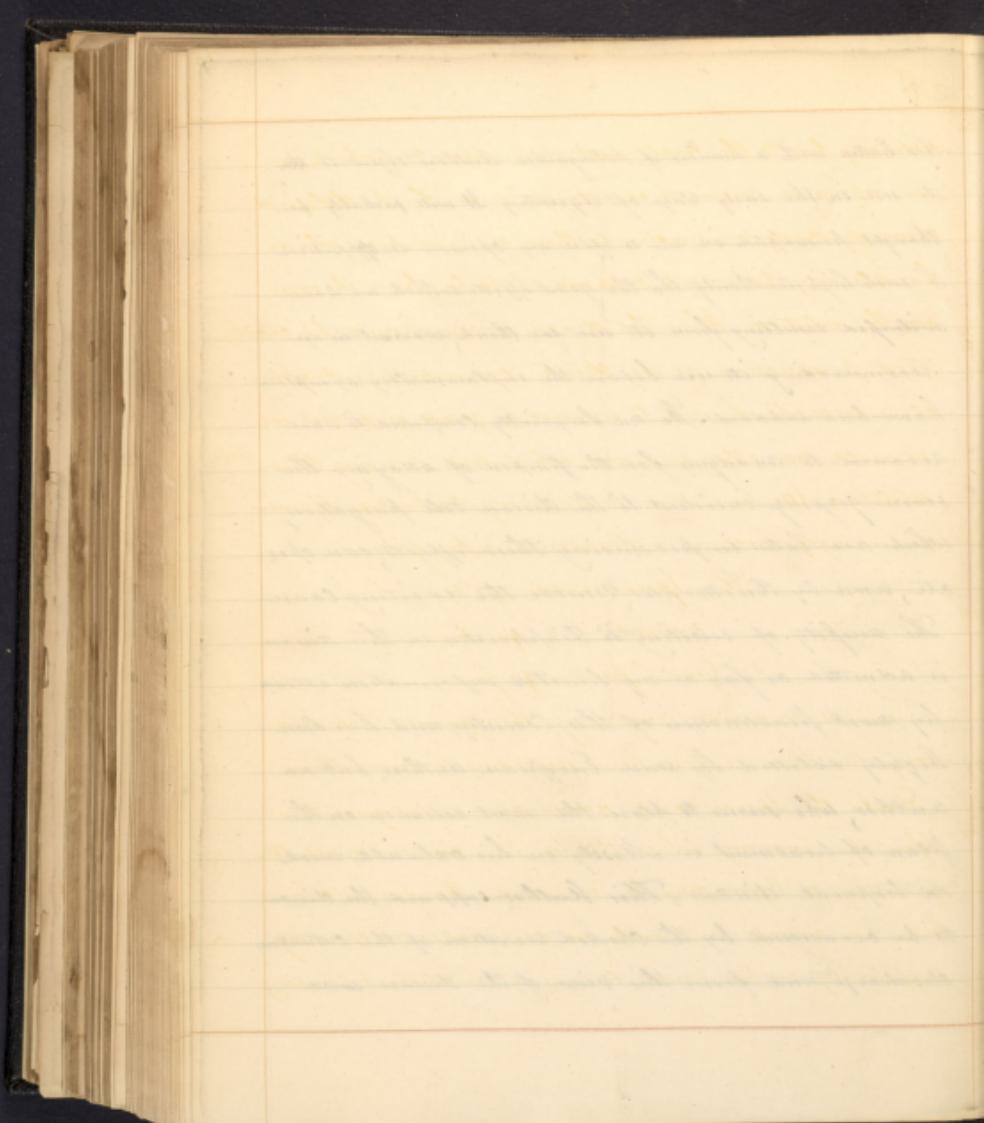
will purge actively, and lie better on the stomach in cases of bilious vomiting than any purgative with which we are acquainted, and ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> admirably calculated to remove bile.

Owing to the extreme excitability of the stomach, and violent griping, in this disease, we will frequently find Enemas of the highest importance. By their use we frequently have it in our power to relieve some of the most distressing symptoms of the disease & promote the operation of purgation, tho' we would not use them to the exclusion of cathartics. It is generally agreed by physicians and laid down as a rule seldom to be departed from, that purgations should be continued until the evacuation from the bowels assume a natural aspect. The tenesmus & tenesmus we believe to be in general occasioned by the vitiated bile and solids remaining in the intestines, and these symptoms are seldom removed till what we consider their exciting cause is overcome.

The means we think best suited to calm irritation is Opium in combination with other Medicines.



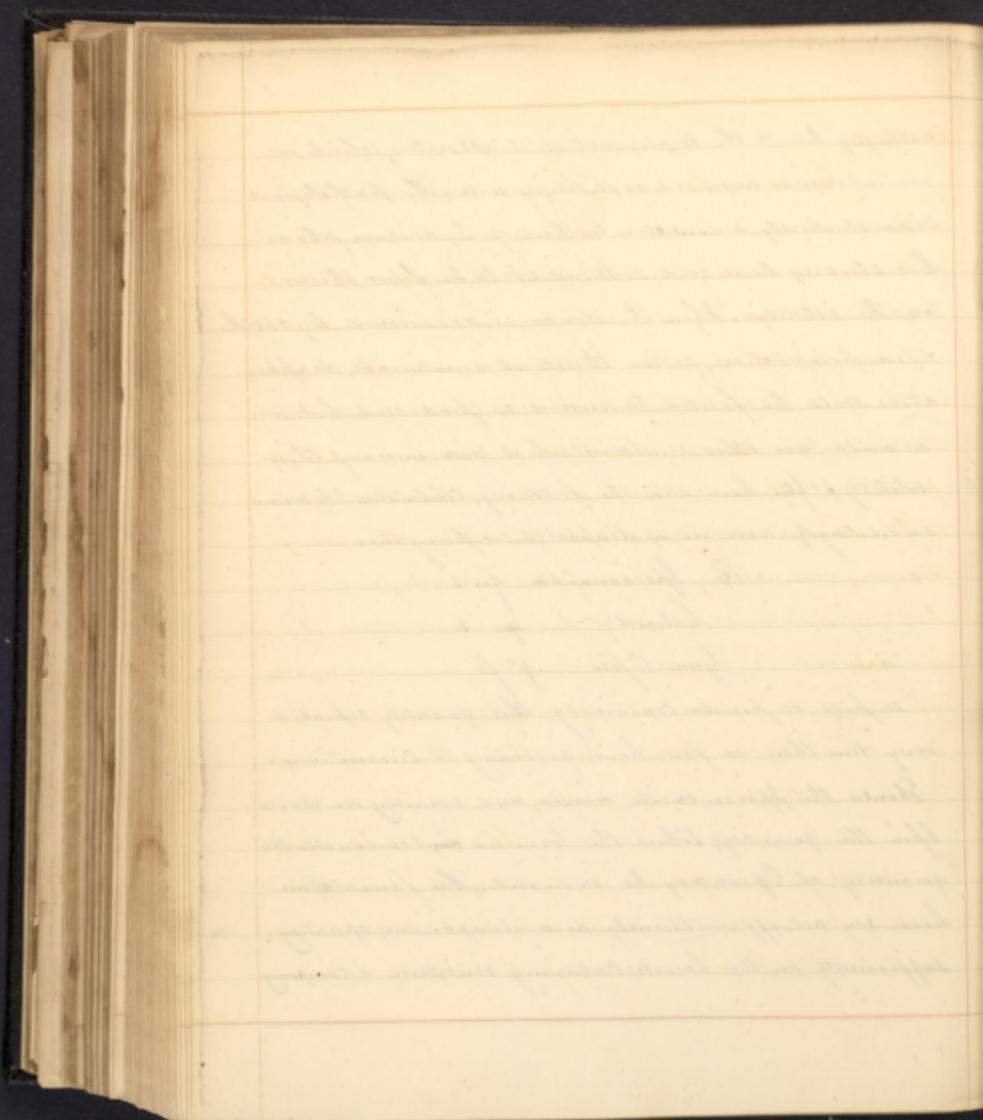
Dr. Batten with a number of distinguished Authors object to the use in the early stage of Mysentery. It will probably be thought presumption in me to offer my opinion in opposition to such high authority, tho' the good effects which we have attributed resulting from its use, we think, warrant us in recommending its use before the inflammatory symptoms have been subdued. We are frequently compelled to have recourse to an odypos for the purpose of allaying the severe griping incident to the disease till paroxysms, which are later in producing their effects, can operate, and by this means, remove the exciting cause. The necessity of resorting to Tinctures in this disease is admitted as far as my limited information extends by most practitioners of this Country, and has been highly extolled by some European authors, but an author, who seems to place the most reliance on this plan of treatment is Morey in his valuable work on tropical diseases. This Author supposed the disease to be occasioned by the checked secretion of the cutaneous discharge and from this view of the disease was



naturally led to the Employment of diaphoretics, which we are informed answer exceedingly well. The pathological views of Moseley are similar to those of Sydenham, who as has already been said, supposes it to be fever thrown on the intestines. When the diuretic is occasioned by check'd perspiration, as we think it sometimes is, diaphoretics will be found to answer a good end, but we would use other remedies which will increase their utility. We have seen the following combination to answer exceedingly well as a diaphoretic & purgative.

R<sup>e</sup> Specumanda gr. 6  
Calomel gr. 2  
Gum. Opii 9<sup>ss</sup>

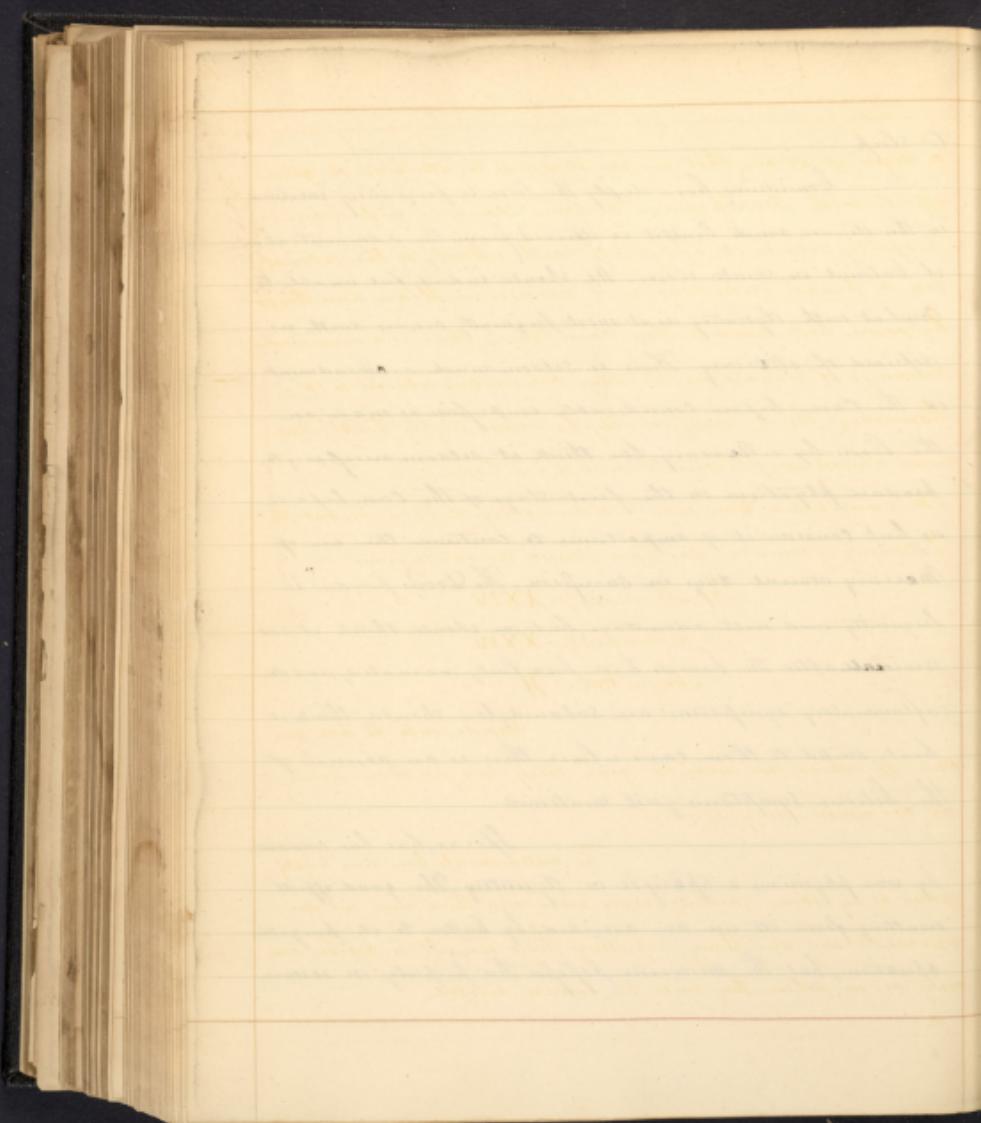
a pill or powder containing this quantity, repeated every two three or four hours, according to Circumstances. Should the Specus excite nausea, and vomiting we should lessen the quantity till the vomitings are considerable the quantity of Opium may be increased. This formula we have seen effectually as a diaphoretic, operating sufficiently on the bowels, Calming irritation & con�



To sleep

Considering how deeply the liver is frequently involved in this disease much benefit is derived from the administration of Calomel in small doses. We should indeed feel unable to combat with Hydrocephalus as it most frequently occurs with us, deprived of Mercury. There is seldom much amendment in the case before considerable improvement is made on the liver by Mercury. We think it seldom necessary to produce ptyalism in the first stage of the case before us, but consider it of importance to continue the use of Mercury several days in succession. The Doctor's powder is frequently used with advantage, but we should think it not serviceable after the bowels have been fully evacuated, and the inflammatory symptoms are subsided, we should think it best suited to those cases where there is an absence of the bilious symptoms just mentioned.

Spica has been considered by some physicians a specific in Hydrocephalus. The good effects resulting from its use are ascribed by bullet to its purgative operation, but the medicine possesses this property in so small



a degree, if at all, that we are disposed to attribute its good effects with Dr Chapman to some specific or peculiar property which it possesses, or with a Novelty to the relaxation & perspiration which it occasions. It has been thought by some best suited to those cases where there is a considerable discharge of blood from the Anus, amounting almost to a haemorrhage, tho' it will probably be found highly beneficial under almost any circumstances of the Case.

In cases where there was a redundancy of Acid present the following formula has been found advantageous

R: Specac: gr. XXIV

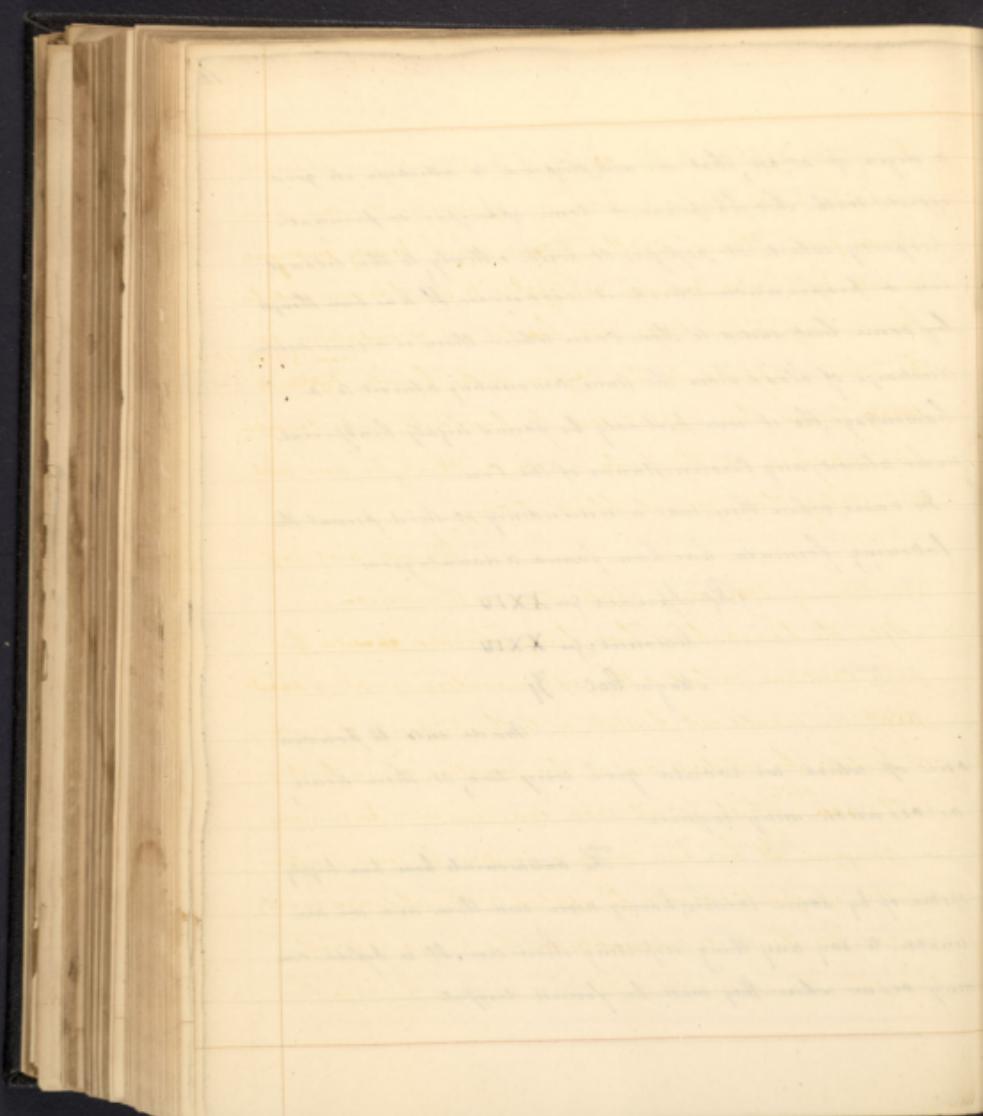
Calomel: gr. XXIV

Magn: Cal: 3*ij*

Made into 12 powders

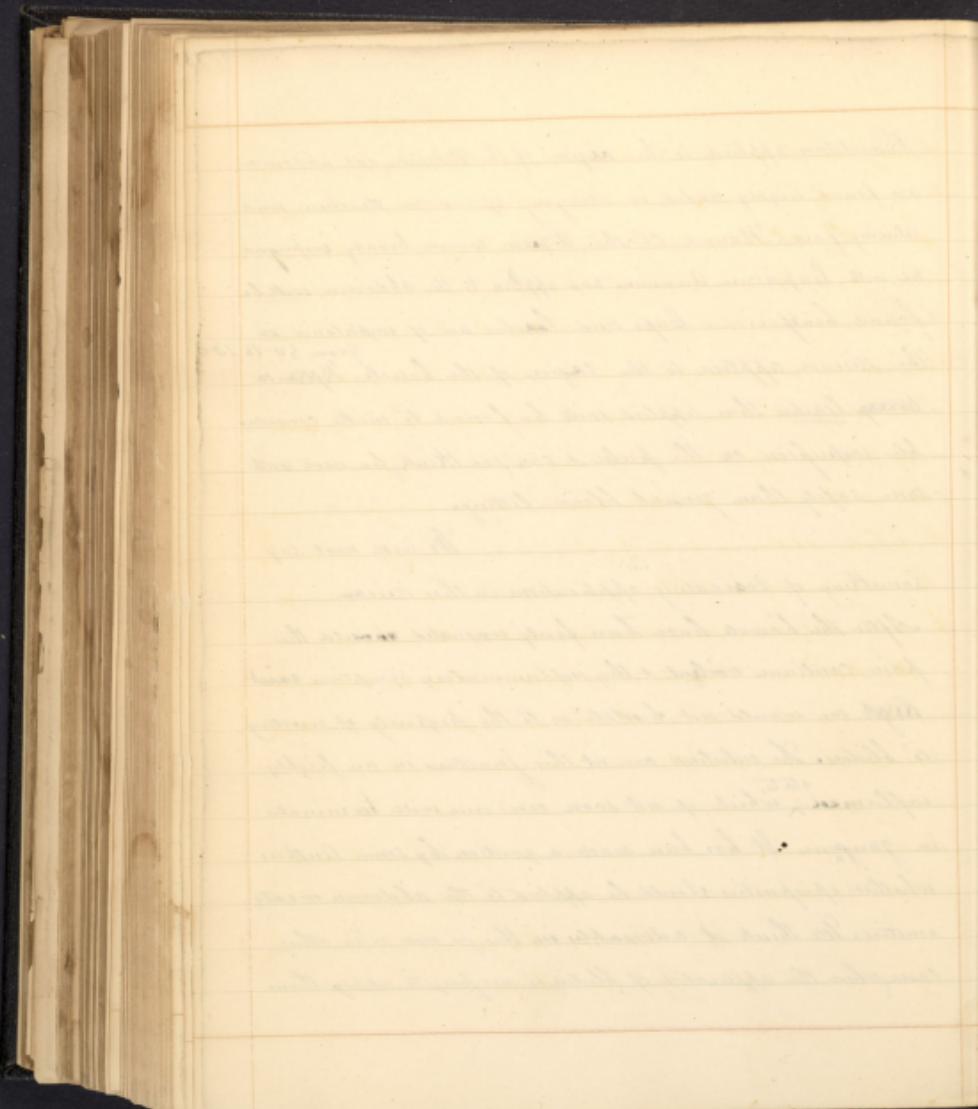
one of which we would give every two, or three hours,  
as occasion may require

The antimonials have been highly  
spoken of by some writers, having never seen them and we are  
unable to say any thing respecting their use. It is possible con-  
mey occur where they will be found useful



Fomentations applied to the region of the stomach, and abdomen are found highly useful in allaying spasmodic distress and relieving pain. Flannel Cloths impregnated with warm brandy impregnated with Capsicum Annuum and applied to the abdomen will be found beneficial. Cups and leeches are of importance in the disease, applied to the region of the bowels. <sup>from 50 to 100</sup> ~~leeches~~ leeches thus applied will be found to make considerable impression on the pulse & can, we think, be used with more safety than general blood-letting.

We will next say something of vesicating applications in this disease. After the bowels have been fully evacuated should the pain continue violent & the inflammatory symptoms ~~exist~~ <sup>exist</sup> ~~exist~~ we would not hesitate as to the propriety of resorting to blisters. The intestines are at this juncture in an highly <sup>state</sup> inflamed <sup>state</sup> which if not soon overcome will terminate in gangrene. It has been made a question by some Authors whether epipastics should be applied to the abdomen or rectum. We think it advisable in this, as well as in other cases, when the application of blisters is necessary to apply them



directly over the seat of the disease unless forbidden by circumstances which to name. Some have supposed blisters when applied to the abdomen, prove very distressing to the patient while going to stool. The pain and inconveniences to which the patient is subjected, can we believe be borne much better than is generally imagined, & we would not be deterred from doing what we consider of such importance by ~~any~~ any trivial objections which may be raised. In violent cases of the disease a blister applied large enough to cover the whole abdomen will be found exceedingly efficacious. They frequently act like a charm in relieving some of the most distressing symptoms incident to the disease.

The terminal & tedious symptoms which are more developed towards the close of the disease require that something should be done for their removal. Senna and Opium in various states of combination have generally been recommended for this purpose. The annexed formula copied from Doctor Chapman's Therapeutics has been found highly useful.

R. Sal Rhei XX gr.

Senna - X gr.

Apparatus for making  
the current in America

Gum Opii 111 grs

Ol Cinnam: 8 gutt.

Gum Arabic: 9.5 ft. Musc. Lic in pills X

One of which every two or three hours"

Common practice To relieve the griping fits  
Pleagorous mixture has been found serviceable The  
following is the formula for making it

R. Ol. Ricini 3*ij*

Gum Arabic: 3*ij*

Sacchar. Alb: 3*ij*

Tinct Opii 50vols 60 gutt.

Ag: menth: oil Cinnamom: 3*ij* a table  
spoon full to be given every two or three hours as may  
seem necessary. It is preferable to the Oil alone for several  
reasons, but principally on account of its remaining best  
in the Stomach & digestions of fresh butter have been  
recommended & will probably be found to answer  
well. Anodyne emetics are important at this period  
of the disease, and will be found to relieve the  
tormina & teresmus as readily as any other means with

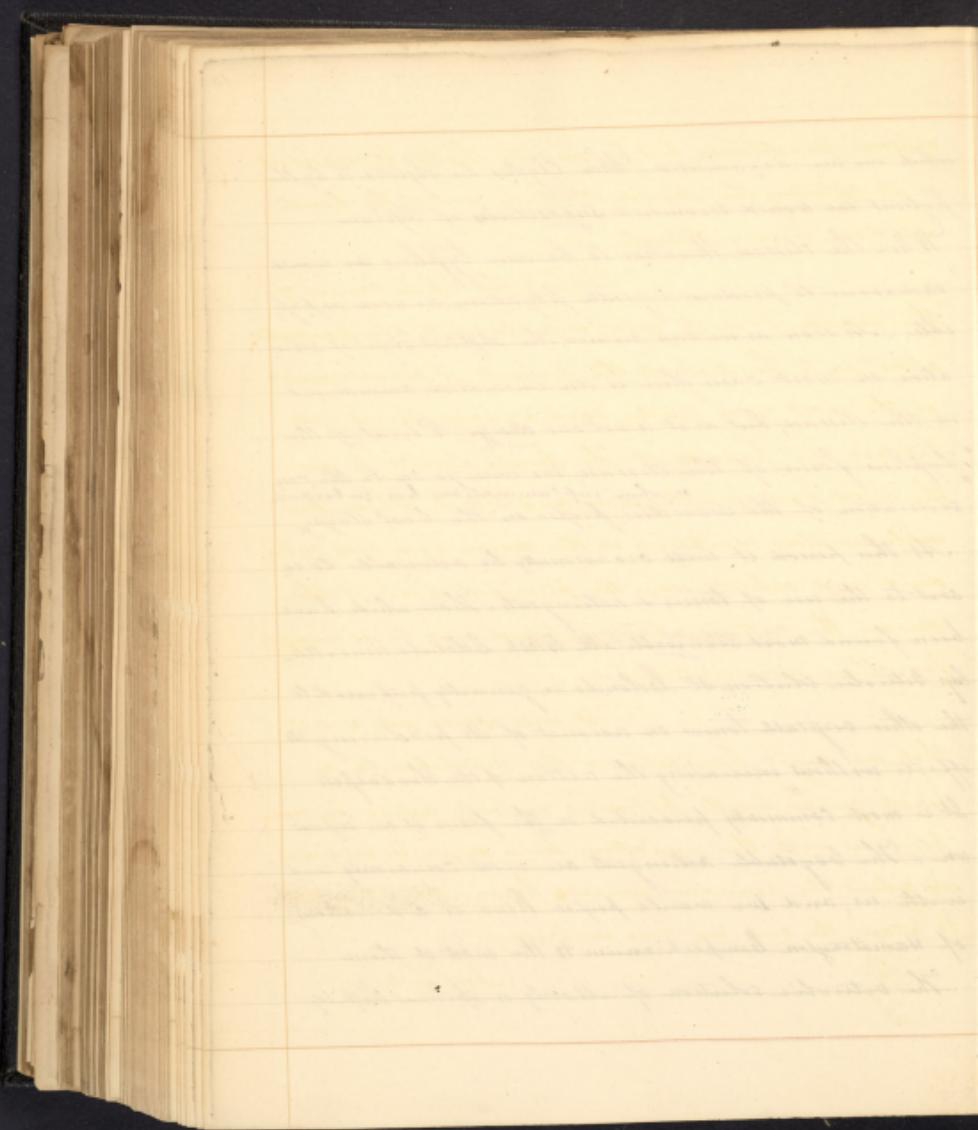
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which we are acquainted. When Clysters are objected to by the patient we would recommend Subpositoids of Opium

When the disease threatens to become typhus we would endeavour to produce a gentle pyrexia as soon as possible. As soon as we can perceive the slightest sign of salivation in most cases, there is an imminent commencement in the disease, but as it is not our design to treat of the typhus form of the disease we will go <sup>on</sup> to the consideration of the remedies proper in the last stage.

At this period it will occasionally be advisable to resort to the use of tonics & astringents. Those which have been found most serviceable are Bark, Colombo, Kino, & <sup>when</sup> ~~when~~ <sup>in</sup> Vitriolic solution &c. Colombo is generally preferred to the other vegetable tonics on account of its producing its effects without increasing the action of the blood vessels. It is most commonly prescribed in the form of an infusion. The vegetable astringents are not commonly used with us, and we would prefer Kino or a decoction of *Hamamelis Virginiana* to the most of them.

The vitriolic solution of Almond is spoken highly



of some practitioners, but is generally objected to on account of its affecting the Stomach, which in most of the bowel affections, is very delicate.

During the whole course of the disease it is of great importance to pay particular attention to the diet of the patient. It should consist of the most mild articles, such as Sago, Arrow-root, Papaya, rice, panada &c. The drinks should be for the most part Mucilaginous and tepid. When the inflammatory symptoms of the disease have been subdued and debility seems the principal part of the disease, the articles above mentioned may be exchanged for others more nutritious.

It will appear quite evident that we might have extended this dissertation to a much greater length, but as we are only acting in compliance with the requisitions for a degree in Medicine we submit the preceding remarks hoping ~~to improve~~ to attain the end we have in view.

As. Lyle

